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NEWS RELEASE

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Health Advisory for Queen Creek Area Remains In Effect

The Arizona Department of Health Services is issuing a public health advisory for the Queen Creek area today due to overnight air quality readings that indicate the potential for adverse health effects due to smoke from a large wood chip fire in the area that erupted Saturday.

A public health advisory is triggered when particulate levels reach 350 micrograms per cubic meter (ug/m^3). The particulate matter levels measured last night by the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality were consistently above $350 \text{ ug}/\text{m}^3$.

“We anticipate that wood smoke and particulate matter from the fire will increase again tonight due to forecasted calm winds and cool temperatures. Last night’s readings were high enough to potentially cause health problems in people, particularly those with pre-existing conditions such as asthma,” said Will Humble, office chief of the ADHS Environmental Health program. “People that live in the smoky area should stay indoors and close their windows to reduce exposure, or find an alternative place to stay tonight.”

The Department has contacted schools in the affected area and advised them to restrict students’ time outdoors until the smoke clears.

Itchy eyes, cough, runny nose and upper airway irritation are typical symptoms of short-term exposure to smoke. Other potential health effects include headache, dizziness and nausea. The Department advises residents to consult a physician if physical symptoms are severe or continue beyond several days.

The smoke in the area is originating from a 25-acre pile of wood chips that is burning at the corner of Ellsworth Rd. and the Hunt Highway.

For more information, contact the ADHS Office of Environmental Health at (602) 230-5830.